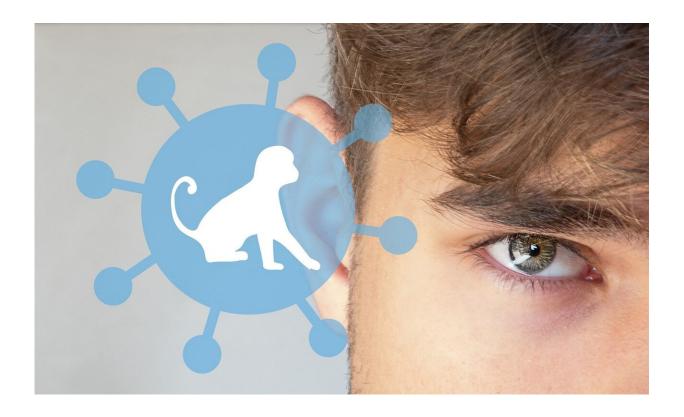# Medical Xpress

Does washing clothes eliminate monkeypox? What to know about disinfecting for the virus

August 15 2022, by Megan Cardona

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The monkeypox virus remains a global health emergency.

The 2022 monkeypox outbreak started after the first case was reported

on May 17 in Portugal.

The monkeypox [virus](#) is rarely fatal, with over 99% of [infected people](#) likely to survive.

Monkeypox can spread when a person comes into contact with the virus from an infected animal, infected person, or materials contaminated with the virus, per the CDC.

The virus can survive on linens, clothing and other surfaces, according to the CDC. In one study, [health officials](#) found live virus 15 days after a patient's home was left unoccupied.

Here's what to know about disinfecting for monkeypox in your home.

What cleaners are best to fight monkeypox?

The CDC recommends using a disinfectant registered with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. This can be checked with a number on the the bottle or canister.

Disinfectants are different from [household cleaners](#) or sanitizers because they generally kill more microbes on a surface or object while cleaners remove germs and sanitizers reduce germs. The CDC advises cleaning surfaces before disinfecting for best results.

The surface should remain wet with the EPA registered disinfectant for the amount of time indicated on the canister to ensure the product is effective.

The CDC advises cleaning and disinfecting [household items](#) in the following order if exposed to the virus:

- Collect and contain in a sealed bag any soiled waste such as bandages, [paper towels](#), food packaging, and other general trash items.
- Gather contaminated clothing and linens before cleaning the room. Avoid shaking the items as that could spread infectious particles.
- Upholstered furniture and other soft furnishing
- Carpet and flooring
- Waste disposal

Does washing clothes get rid of the monkeypox virus?

Washing contaminated clothes and linens should be effective in disinfecting them from the monkeypox virus.

According to the CDC, used or contaminated clothing, linens and bedding materials, towels and other fabric items should be contained until laundering. When possible, people with monkeypox should handle and launder their own soiled laundry and not mix items with other household members' belongings.

A standard washing machine detergent is efficient to use while following label instructions. Laundry sanitizers may be used but are not necessary, according to health officials.

Always wash your hands after handling dirty laundry.

Should furniture be sanitized?

Soft furnishings and upholstered furniture that had minimal contact with an infected person should be disinfected.

Household items and surfaces that have likely not been in contact with a person infected with monkeypox do not need to be disinfected, according to the CDC. This includes clothing and items in drawers or boxes that have not been in contact with an infected person.

Monkeypox symptoms

Symptoms include fever, headache, muscle aches and backache, swollen lymph nodes, chills, sore throat, congestion, cough, and, most notably, a rash that can look like pimples or blisters, according to the agency.

Monkeypox symptoms are similar to, but milder than, the symptoms of smallpox, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Monkeypox begins with fever, headache, muscle aches and exhaustion. The monkeypox virus also causes lymph nodes to swell while smallpox does not.

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